

[A trip from Ogallala to Big Springs]

S 241 - Kei DUP

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Mrs. Bessie [Jellensten?] ADDRESS Ogallala Nebr.

DATE Oct. 20 19 , 1938 SUBJECT A trip form [Ogallala?] to Big Springs.

south of the south Platte River, August 13, 1914.

1. Name and address of informant Mrs. J. J. McCarthy, gave me this material, written by her husband before he passed on.

2. Date and time of interview Oct. 12, 1938 In her home in Ogallala

3. Place of interview

4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant I happened to know most of the old timers and know about who to go to see especially around Ogallala, but some times they are not home, or have their time taken up so many times I have to go back three or four times, but not so often.

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, ect.

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER Mrs. Bessie [Jellenston?] ADDRESS Ogallala, Nebr.

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DATE Oct. 19, 1938 SUBJECT A trip

A trip from Ogallala to Big Springs, south of the Platte River, August 13, 1914

Crossing the South Platte River bridge at Ogallala, and taking the valley road west, you will not have to go far when the work that man has wrought in alliance with nature begins to unfold itself the foliage of the numerous groves that surround the farm houses, and make shady avenues of the [seeds?] and byways in a heavy dark green, the ears of corn are dropping languidly from a rank stalk growth that has not a mingle seared leaf; the bloom is on the third of the season's growth of alfalfa that now looks so beautifully green, and adds to so much to the scenic features of the valley, that it looks almost criminal to out it down; the alfalfa stocks from the previous two outtings are so thick in the fields that there is hardly room for any more.

Several threshing machines are at work an both sides of the road, I stop at each andall, and make investigations as to the yield per acre, I find that some fields run 25 bushels, some 30 and 36 bushels [?] in a few cases the yield was 40 bushels of fall wheat to the acre barley and spelts averaged better than 40 bushels, and oats, in all places where the threshing is done, have ran from 50 to 60 bushels, but in particular field, still unthreshed, the owner who is a very practical /# farmer, and one of the most conservative men in the state, estimates the yield of his field at 100 bushels per acre, there are several more in his class, so that this is not an isolated case. The wild hay is also being out and stacked in the meadows along the river; there is activity and prosperity in all of those western Nebraska fields that are, thank God, far removed from war and [carnage.?] In the [??] tomato shows blushingly through its lower of green, immense cabbages are whitening at one side of the fence, while at the other side are a bunch of fattening hogs, all of the necessary raw materials for the ultimate weinie and sauerkraut, and the Nebraska hen, immotalized immortalized by Bill Maupin; of every known bread, is everywhere in evidence and in the pink of condition.

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More reasons than one tend to make this condition possible in the most half of Keith County, on this torrid August day, when the minds from the [parched?] states to the south of us are destroying all unwatered plant life; first is a soil unexcelled for productivity, and the retention of moisture: second is a phenomenal condition of local rainfall, that in most years is all [sufficient?] to raise good crops, but the factor that controls the situation, and insures a crop every year is the Western Irrigation district canal, that waters in the aggregate by surface and sub-irrigation 20,000 acres of land in Keith County, of this acreage in round numbers 15,000 acres pay a water tax for the current year of 40 cents an acre, there is an additional bond tax of 25 cents an acre, and annually less that will be paid off, altogether in [1916?], so that the only future ditch tax will be for maintenance only, and in the nature of things this will be smaller than at present, as all the big work is done, such as permanent concrete and steel head gate, concrete drops and boxes, in fact but little more than the annual cleaning, and the cost of supervision and distribution of water is to be provided for each year after the immediate future, better than 5,000 acres of sub-irrigation irrigated land that benefits from the water being run in the canal, being outside the district is not taxed still in this part of the valley I find an almost tropical conditon of plant growth from sub-irrigation.

To stand on one of the numerous bridges that cross the canal, and match the [?] body of water that it carries, roll rapidly[,?] by, is a sight worth seeing; and the knowledge that every drop of this water is nourishment for vegetation, and knowing knowing how much this nourishment is needed further along the valley, the thought occurs, why not extend the ditch further, if not all the time, certainly part of the time each year, there would be water enough for all of the South Platte Valley.

Keith County is a great county, should you see it all and know it all, at another time I will tell you more about it.